

Swig Moving Seals to Cleveland

JUN 24 1976

By JOHN PORTER

The National Hockey League will approve the transfer of the California Seals to Cleveland next Wednesday, The Tribune has learned.

The Seals would be in the Ohio city today lock, stock and hockey puck if the World Hockey Association formally had approved the move of the Cleveland Crusaders to Hollywood, Fla.

The WHA is scheduled to give that okay next Monday or Tuesday at its meetings in Toronto. On Wednesday, the NHL will tell owners Mel Swig and George Gund that they may rename their franchise the Cleveland Seals.

NHL President Clarence Campbell told The

Tribune from his Montreal office last night that the transfer of the Seals is item two on the Chicago meeting's agenda. The minutes are item one.

"It will be a formal request to transfer the Oakland franchise to Cleveland," said Campbell. "The city (Cleveland) qualifies and the rink (Richfield Coliseum) qualifies. It would be the same group owning the club, so I guess we would have no other choice but to approve the move."

Campbell said he had talked to Swig "extensively" the last few days and there is no question that the Seals will go to Cleveland after nine years of threatened moves all over North America.

The league president said the departure of the WHA team from Cleveland is "up in the air even though it has been announced. We don't want to get tricked. There is the possibility of litigation."

The NHL is barred from moving into any area that has a WHA franchise as part of an agreement between the two leagues. That's why no one with the Seals will announce the shift before the WHA makes its move.

Swig and Gund are in Cleveland with the Seals' accountant, group salesman, ticket manager and publicist. "I'm keeping my options, obviously," Swig told The Tribune. "The odds are that the team won't play in Oakland next season."

Swig has asked Oakland Alameda County Coliseum Arena officials for a price to buy out the remaining two years on his lease.

"The board discussed it and we presented him with a figure that is non-negotiable," said Coliseum General Manager Bill Cunningham. "When he responds to that the board will take final action and seek approval from the city and county."

If Swig refuses to meet that figure, the Coliseum Inc. is expected to take legal action.

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Cont. from 1st Sports Page

Swig and his family interests own two-thirds of the Seals and Gund has the rest. A rearrangement of stock probably will make the latter, a native of Cleveland, the majority owner.

"Their attorney wrote up a lease to see if we liked it," Swig said after six hours of negotiations with officials of the arena in Richfield Township, a community halfway between Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. "We haven't worked everything out yet."

Swig still maintains that Denver and San Jose remain in the running for the Seals, but sources in both cities are pessimistic.

In Denver, where there is a prohibitive 10 per cent sales tax on tickets for sports events, the hope is that the Kansas City Scouts will become its franchise next season. Item three on the NHL agenda—right after the Seals—is discussion of the K.C. situation.

The financially-floundering Scouts are embargoed from moving anywhere until the Seals relocate, but Cleveland's acquisition of the California franchise removes it. And the fourth and final item on the agenda is none other than "schedule revision."

San Jose officials still are making an 11th hour bid, but feel defeated.

"I can safely say all of Mr. Swig's efforts in the other part of the country aren't helping our efforts any," said Gordon Levy, spokesman for the San Jose Chamber of Commerce.

Swig said he'd get an update on the San Jose situation when he returns tomorrow. He has told the San Jose officials they must raise \$1.725 million this week to have a chance at the Seals. That's nearly twice as much as he asked two weeks ago, a discrepancy Swig blamed on his accountant's "arithmetical error."

Another miscalculation Swig admitted was the team's projected losses of \$1.5 million for last season. They lost \$2.1 million and still haven't paid numerous debts.

As for the Seals players themselves, team management has advised them to sell their Bay Area homes and at least one already has.

Debt-Ridden Seals Asking for Cleveland

JUN 29 1976

By JOHN PORTER

The California Seals owe more than \$500,000 and will need an additional \$300,000-plus to buy off the two years remaining on the lease with the Oakland Alameda County Coliseum, The Tribune has learned.

Nevertheless, team majority owner Mel Swig plans to go before the National Hockey League's finance committee tonight in Chicago to clear the last

hurdle between the Seals and Cleveland.

Swig and George Gund, the Cleveland owner who owns a third of the Seals, must show they can avoid legal complications with the Oakland Coliseum, pay off their debts, refinance their original loans with Union Bank, pay the \$2.7 million still owed to former owner Charles Finley and come up with operating capital for next season.

According to a source with

the finance committee, there is a scheme to accomplish that.

Approval by the league Board of Governors tomorrow would be a mere formality.

"Many of the bills were paid last week," declared Swig last night, declining to say how much was outstanding. "Some bills will be paid tomorrow."

According to the source, the big ones "will remain unpaid until the Seals' transfer is approved."

The only other threat to Swig's plans would be a World Hockey Association reversal of its decision to move their Cleveland Crusaders to Hollywood, Fla. If the WHA—meeting in Toronto today and tonight—doesn't release the territory, Swig may have run out of all those options he said he was keeping open the past weeks.

The San Jose project fell through because "there wasn't enough time" to raise the neces-

sary \$1.725 million, according to Swig.

Denver no longer is a possibility for the Seals. The Bud Palmer group is incensed over Swig's sudden shift to Cleveland and has switched its sights to the Kansas City Scouts which can be bought more cheaply.

Seals President Munson Campbell, prematurely reported elsewhere yesterday as having resigned, probably will surface

in Denver and spearhead the drive for the Scouts.

Campbell was unavailable for comment, but Swig said he had lunch with him yesterday and there had been no resignation or dismissal, although the owner said: "I'm not sure Munson wants to go to Cleveland with us."

That's a good bet. Campbell lived in Manhattan before com-

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Up Here
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ing to the Bay Area two seasons ago and is not the type to settle in Ohio. Look for him in Denver shortly.

Others who said no to Cleveland were Seals publicist Len Shapiro and PR aide Loretta Marcus, the only employee still with the Seals since they began their NHL experience nine years ago.

Expected to make the move to Cleveland will be G.M. Bill McCreary, who will be the team's only hockey executive. Joining him are head publicist Ron McGrath, group sales director Tom Cochran and marketing Steve Bieri.

The team's Oakland office will close soon, although some employees will remain to process those mounting debts.

NHL to Act On the Seals

JUL 10 1976
By ED SCHOENFELD

Clarence Campbell has called a meeting of the National Hockey League's finance committee Wednesday night in Chicago to act on Mel Swig's request to transfer the Seals from Oakland to Cleveland.

The NHL president told The Tribune yesterday from Montreal he expects the finance committee to reach a final decision at the meeting.

"I'm confident the transfer will be approved if Mr. Swig does the things he now promises to do," Campbell said.

Campbell would not disclose what promises Swig made.

"All I can say," he stated, "is that when the committee first asked Mr. Swig to do the things, he refused, but now I'm told he has agreed to them."

Swig, reached in Cleveland, told The Tribune he hadn't heard of a finance committee meeting.

"Frankly you've caught me by surprise. I haven't talked to Mr. Campbell, and so I didn't know about a meeting Wednesday. Right now we're moving along pretty well (with the proposed transfer), but there is a lot of detail work to be done.

"There's tremendous interest here and things look very promising. The press has been great and the spirit of the community is very encouraging," Swig said.

Campbell said he called the meeting upon the authorization of John Ziegler, chairman of the NHL Board of Governors.

The NHL president explained that under the original terms of the Seals sale to Swig the San Francisco real estate operator had the right to sell the club outside of the Bay Area without approval.

"But," Campbell said, "this is a transfer which wasn't covered in the original terms.

"And," he added, "the finance committee will have to approve it."

Campbell said the committee's approval will not be just a mere formality.

"There are some important considerations to be resolved," he said. "The financial situation hasn't changed. What most concerns us are the obligations Mr. Swig has to meet in the Bay Area."

Campbell also said broadcaster Bud Palmer hopes at Wednesday night's finance meeting to complete a deal to move the financially distressed Kansas City Scouts to Denver for next year. As with Swig's plea to transfer, the Kansas City shift would require unanimous approval of the finance committee.

MUL 13 1976

Cleveland Has Lease For Seals

RICHFIELD, Ohio (AP) — Washington businessman Sanford Greenberg finalized his purchase of the sports Coliseum here today and promptly announced he has signed a lease for it to be the home of the National Hockey League's Seals.

An agreement in principle to purchase the structure from Ohio Sports Center Inc. was announced last month.

The 20,000-seat coliseum between Cleveland and Akron was built two years ago by Cleveland sports magnate Nick Mileti at a cost of \$32 million.

The lease to the Seals is subject to the league finance committee's approval of the team's transfer from Oakland to Cleveland. The Seals' owners were given tentative approval for the move two weeks ago with the stipulation that financing be worked out and local investors be included in the new franchise.

The coliseum that seats more than 18,000 persons for hockey had been the home of the Crusaders of the World Hockey Association, a team in which Mileti once held a major interest. That club is being moved to Hollywood, Fla.

Seals' Hour Of Decision

JUL 14 1976

Embattled Mel Swig's attempt to give his California Golden Seals hockey team a suburban Cleveland address nears a climactic stage in Chicago late today.

Swig today is scheduled to button up final details of a shift from the Oakland Coliseum Arena to a two-year-old, 18,544-seat Richfield (O.) Coliseum and make a pitch in Chicago before the National Hockey League's finance committee.

"I'd say that's a pretty good number," said Swig when a Tribune reporter asked if he's 80 per cent along the road to a new Ohio franchise.

But still very high on today's Seals agenda is a campaign to enlist Cleveland area investors. That remains one of the keys to finance committee

approval.

Swig's Seals have a new tentative landlord, if not yet a new official home.

Sanford Greenberg of Washington, D. C., said yesterday he bought the Seals' potential arena from Coliseum builder Nick Mileti by purchasing Mileti's company, Ohio Sports Center, Inc., and its assets — which include the Coliseum.

Any hint of how the finance committee feels thus far about shifting the team?

"I've only spoken to one member, Bob Sedgewick (the Toronto Maple Leafs' representative on the NHL Board of Governors), and he seemed reasonably satisfied with the progress we've been making," Swig answered.

Greenberg has not invested in the Seals, Swig said.

Hockey Obituary

The Seals Expire

JUL 15 1976

By **JOHN PORTER**

The California Golden Seals are dead.

The end came in Chicago last night at 11 p.m. CDT when owner Mel Swig and the National Hockey League's finance committee reached an agreement for the transfer of the franchise to Cleveland.

"It's all settled," Swig told The Tribune last night, admitting he was quite relieved. Had the NHL said no, Swig would have been liable for more than \$6 million in debts and future obligations.

He still must pay about \$400,000 to the Oakland Alameda County Coliseum Arena for past rental and the two remaining years on the lease and numerous miscellaneous bills from last season.

Swig indicated that he and minority owner George Gund, a native of Ohio, would maintain their stock positions for the present, but "there are indications" that Cleveland interests will buy into the franchise.

"I had to do it," Swig claimed of the transfer. "There was no choice. I'd go broke (in the Bay Area) and

no way was I going to do that."

The Seals had been sickly from birth when they joined the NHL nine years ago. They suffered with unstable management and last-place teams, but the terminal cancer proved to be the advent of the World Hockey Association in 1972.

Player salaries in the league skyrocketed from an average \$25,000 to today's \$75,000. The break-even point for the club at the Arena went from an average of 8,500 fans to Swig's estimated 13,000.

"Some people will think I moved the Seals deliberately," said Swig, who will remain as majority and operating owner of the Cleveland you-name-its. "They don't realize that I couldn't come out even in Oakland."

Swig refused to say exactly how much he's lost in his year of ownership, the sixth in the team's life. However, The Tribune has learned it is close to \$1.4 million and that he has a tax setup for a hefty 150 per cent write-off.

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Chicago

Cont. from 1st Sports Page

Swig said 1,000 pledges for season tickets in Cleveland have been received without "putting a salesman on the road." The Seals never sold more than 1,500 season tickets in the Bay Area.

"We hope to average 13,000 to 14,000 the first season and we can make money with that attendance," claimed Swig.

The Seals managed to finish last in six of their nine seasons and the prediction for next year is last, hardly a come-on for Cleveland fans.

Survivors of the Seals include a stoutly-loyal booster club of some 750 members, a couple of secretaries in the office and one player who doesn't want to shovel snow-drifts in Ohio.

"I don't want to go to Cleveland because of my health," goalie Gary Simmons, an asthmatic, told The Tribune last night. "I'm deeply disappointed about the move. You would've thought with local ownership the club would have stayed. Now I may peddle milk for an Oakland dairy next season.

"With the Seals," he continued, "you never know until the last nail is struck into the coffin."

Alas, you hockey fans, Mel Swig and the National Hockey League did just that last night in Chicago.

Chicago	35	52	202	18 1/2
Minnesota	37	45	451	14
ATLETICS	39	44	470	12 1/2
Texas	44	41	518	8 1/2
Kansas City	44	38	537	7
	31	31	622	-

Swig's Multi-Million Dollar Hockey Fling

JUL 16 1977

By ED SCHOENFELD

SAN FRANCISCO—"It was a costly experience. Very costly," Mel Swig commented as he reflected on his trials and tribulations as a hockey club owner.

"I'd say it cost me several million dollars," said the San Francisco real estate developer, who owned hockey clubs in San Francisco, Oakland and Cleveland over the past 16 years.

He's had it.

"I don't see a future for hockey on the National Hockey League level in this market," Swig said when asked why he won't be an owner again.

Swig just shelled out \$209,765.13 to Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum, Inc., as a negotiated settlement for lost revenue, interest and legal fees since he moved the California

Seals from Oakland to Cleveland.

He's been out of hockey since selling the Barons (formerly the Seals) to a Cleveland syndicate.

Swig owned the San Francisco Seals in the Western Hockey League for five years (1961-66), the Seals in the NHL in Oakland for the 1975-76 season and the Seals in Cleveland for the 1976-77 season.

"I met a lot of nice people in hockey," he reflected. "I had a lot of nice kids playing for me.

"But," he repeated, "it's not pleasant to lose money."

Swig had been portrayed for years as a hockey fan fulfilling a dream as the owner of a hockey club.

"Oh, I enjoy the game," Swig said. "But, it was business with me.

"I had hoped to have built a building for hockey in San Francisco. I think it would have been successful."

Swig abandoned his plan to construct a building in the Yerba Buena Project in May of 1976 when he was unable to muster the necessary civic support in San Francisco.

President Robert T. Nahas of Coliseum, Inc. yesterday announced the receipt of Swig's payment.

At the time the Seals franchise was relocated in Cleveland prior to the 1976-77 season, there were still two seasons remaining on the Seals' contract with the Coliseum.

"Mel Swig has always been fair in acknowledging his contractual obligation to the Coliseum," Nahas said. "He has endeavored over a period of many months to reach an equitable settlement with us."

Nahas said Coliseum, Inc. has agreed to

drop its lawsuit against the NHL and former Seals owners and release them from further contractual obligations.

The \$209,765.13 will eventually be turned over to the City of Oakland and Alameda County as part of the Coliseum's annual net revenue payments, Nahas said.

Swig said he doesn't know exactly what his hockey fling cost because he is still waiting for his sale of the Barons to be finalized.

"I think prospects for the NHL look like they'll be better in future," Swig commented. "Particularly, if the NHL merges with the WHA. But, even if there is no merger, I think things look better.

"The players' salaries have gone crazy. I see a trend to lessen player budgets developing. This will help."

Swig will be an interested spectator. With several million dollars less in his jeans.

Where they are now:

HOCKEY

FORWARDS

- Fred Ahern (1974-76) — Plays for Oklahoma City in CHL.
 Ivan Boldirev (1971-74) — Plays for Detroit in NHL.
 Lyle Bradley (1973-74) — Runs interior remodeling business in Salt Lake City.
 Charlie Burns (1967-68) — Owns catering business in Bloomington, Minn.
 Larry Cahan (1967-68) — Lives in Vancouver.
 Wayne Carleton (1971-72) — Lives in Toronto.
 Gary Croteau (1970-74) — Realtor in Denver.
 Bob Dillabough (1968-70) — Works as miner in Northern Manitoba.
 Gerry Ehman (1967-71) — Director of player personnel for NY Islanders in NHL.
 Norm Ferguson (1968-72) — Realtor in San Diego.
 Mike Fidler (1975-76) — Plays for Springfield (Mass.) in AHL.
 Dave Gardner (1974-76) — Plays hockey in Switzerland.
 Stan Gilbertson (1971-75) — Realtor in San Ramon.
 Bob Girard (1975-76) — Owns bar in Montreal.
 Ted Hampson (1967-71) — Scout for Minnesota North Stars in NHL and works for NHL central scouting.
 Joe Hardy (1969-71) — Works for publishing company in Quebec City, Quebec.
 Billy Harris (1967-69) — Coached Edmonton Oilers in NHL last year.
 Ron Harris (1967-68) — Coaching junior hockey in Western Canada.
 Dennis Hextall (1970-71) — Salesman for steel company in Detroit.
 Billy Hicke (1967-71) — Owns sporting goods store in Regina, Saskatchewan.
 Ernie Hicke (1970-72) — Owns vending machine and acoustic tile cleaning companies in Rocklin, Calif.
 Gary Holt (1973-76) — Sells diamond drill bits in Salt Lake City.
 Dave Hrachosky (1973-76) — Drives truck for Coca Cola in Salt Lake City.
 Ron Huston (1973-76) — Electrician in Spokane, Wash.
 Earl Ingarfield (1968-71) — Owns radio station, motel, women's wear store and 50 percent of junior hockey team in Lethbridge, Alberta.
 Gary Jarrett (1968-72) — Realtor in Colorado Springs, Colo.
 Joey Johnston (1971-75) — Carpenter in Peterboro, Ontario.
 Rick Kessel (1973-74) — Drives beer truck in Toronto.
 Wayne King (1973-76) — Works in hospital in Toronto.
 Ralph Klassen (1975-76) — Plays for St. Louis Blues in NHL.
 Pete Laframboise (1971-74) — Just retired from pro hockey.
 Mike Loughton (1967-71) — Teaches ice skating in Vancouver.
 Brian Lavender (1974-75) — Sold bar in Denver, now works at golf course.
 Reggie Leach (1971-74) — Plays for Detroit Red Wings in NHL.
 Al MacAdam (1974-76) — Plays for Minnesota North Stars in NHL.
 Walt McKechnie (1971-74) — Plays for Detroit Red Wings in NHL.
 Wayne Merrick (1975-76) — Plays for New York Islanders in NHL.
 Hartland Monahan (1973-74) — Plays hockey in Japan.
 Morris Mott (1972-76) — Teaches history at University of Manitoba.
 Jim Moxey (1974-76) — Works at gas station in Toronto.
 Bob Murdoch (1975-76) — Works for dairy in Cranbrook, British Columbia.
 Neil Nicholson (1969-70) — Plays hockey in Germany.
 Don O'Donoghue (1969-72) — Owns Posh Potato and Hof Brau at Eastridge Shopping Center in San Jose.
 Jim Pappin (1975-76) — Works in motel business in Sudbury, Ontario.
 Larry Patey (1973-75) — Plays for St. Louis Blues in NHL.
 Craig Patrick (1971-76) — General manager of New York Rangers in NHL.
 Gerry Pinler (1971-72) — Did radio and TV color in Canada at pro hockey games and works in family drug stores.
 Larry Popeln (1967-68) — Director of player personnel for Vancouver Canucks in NHL.
 Bobby Sheehan (1971-72) — Plays for New Haven Nighthawks of AHL.
 Charlie Simmer (1974-76) — Plays for Los Angeles Kings in NHL.
 Frank Spring (1974-75) — Lives in Birmingham, Ala.
 George Swarbrick (1967-69) — Owns electrical parts business in Omaha, Neb.
 Gene Ubriaco (1968-70) — Coaches Birmingham (Ala.) South Stars in CHL.

SEALS

- Tom Webster (1971-72) — Coaches Tulsa Oilers in CHL.
 Stan Weir (1972-75) — Plays for Detroit Red Wings in NHL.
 Butch Williams (1974-76) — Coaches semi-pro hockey team at Reno.
 Tommy Williams (1970-72) — Sales manager for pipe company in Hudson, Mass.
 Larry Wright (1974-75) — Fireman in Regina, Saskatchewan.

DEFENSEMEN

- Bruce Affleck (1975-76) — Plays for Indianapolis of CHL.
 Ken Baird (1971-72) — Plays hockey in Switzerland.
 Bobby Baun (1967-68) — Scouts for Toronto Maple Leafs in NHL.
 Mike Christie (1974-75) — Etonic shoes sales rep in Denver.
 Aut Erickson (1968-70) — Realtor in Phoenix.
 Len Frig (1974-76) — Sells and builds sports courts in Salt Lake City.
 Rick Hampton (1974-76) — Plays pro hockey in Switzerland.
 Harry Howell (1969-71) — Scouts for Minnesota North Stars in NHL.
 Marshall Johnston (1971-74) — Assistant coach of New Jersey Devils in NHL.
 Bert Marshall (1967-73) — Director of player personnel for New Jersey Devils in NHL and owns painting company near Grass Valley, Calif.
 Ted McAneeley (1972-75) — Plays pro hockey in Japan.
 Ray McKay (1973-74) — Coaches Medicine Hat Tigers junior hockey team in Alberta.
 Brent Moeke (1972-76) — Coaches hockey team at Brigham Young University.
 Terry Murray (1972-75) — Assistant coach under brother Bryan for Washington Capitals in NHL.
 Jim Neilson (1974-76) — Owns golf course in Southern California.
 Glenn Patrick (1974-76) — Coaches Peoria (Ill.) Prancers in IHL and owns two restaurants in North Carolina.
 George Pesut (1975-76) — Plays pro hockey in Switzerland.
 Tracy Pratt (1967-68) — Does TV commentary for Vancouver Canucks in NHL.
 Tom Price (1974-76) — Plays for Adirondack (NY) Red Wings in AHL.
 Dick Redmond (1970-73) — Retired from Boston Bruins of NHL last year. Lives in Lynnfield, Mass.
 Paul Shmyr (1971-72) — Retired from Minnesota North Stars of NHL last year.
 Ron Stackhouse (1970-72) — Lives in Toronto. Retired from Pittsburgh Penguins of NHL last year.
 Bob Stewart (1971-75) — Sells real estate in St. Louis.
 Carol Vadnais (1968-72) — Plays for New Jersey Devils of NHL.
 Bryan Watson (1968-69) — Works for Kennedy Foundation, which helps underprivileged children, in Washington D.C.

GOALIES

- Lyle Carter (1972-73) — Lives in Nova Scotia.
 Marv Edwards (1972-75) — Works his farm in Niagara Falls, Ontario.
 Charlie Hodge (1967-70) — Works as scout for Vancouver of NHL.
 Gilles Meloche (1971-75) — Plays for Minnesota North Stars in NHL.
 Gary Simmons (1974-75) — Owns Round Table Pizza parlors in Pleasant Hill and Concord.
 Gary Smith (1971-73) — Lives in Phoenix. Has scouted for Vancouver in NHL.

COACHES

- Fred Glover — Northern California manager for systems maintenance company in Oakland.
 Vic Staskuk — Owns farm in Lethbridge, Alberta.
 Jack Evans — Coaches Salt Lake City Golden Eagles of CHL.
 Bill McCreary — Runs general store at resort on Lake Ontario.

GENERAL MANAGERS

- Frank Setke — Insurance business in Toronto.
 Bill Torrey — General Manager of New York Islanders of NHL.
 Garry Young — Drives taxi in Oshawa, Ontario.
 Fred Glover — See coaches entry.
 Munson Campbell — Vice-president corporate communications for Delaware North.

OWNERS

- Barry Van Gerbig — Owns farm in Vermont and coaches high school hockey team.
 Charlie Finley — Owns insurance company in Chicago and farm in Indiana.
 Mel Swig — Runs family hotel business in San Francisco.